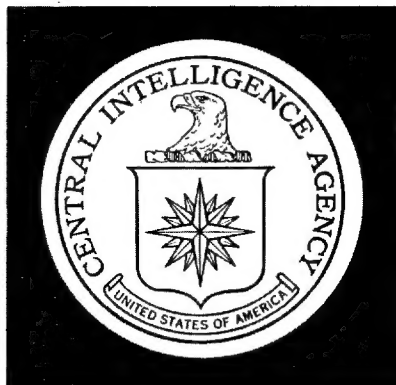


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM

SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL (16-22 SEPTEMBER 1968)

Secret

24 September 1968



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
24 September 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Activities in North Vietnam
South of the 20th Parallel
(16-22 September 1968)

Summary

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[REDACTED] the logistical buildup south of the 20th Parallel continues unabated. In the sanctuary area between the 19th and 20th Parallels, there has been a clearly discernible buildup in logistical facilities. More rolling stock, trucks, and waterborne logistics craft are openly in use than in late August and early September. New transshipment and storage areas are in evidence, frequently protected by revetments in case the bombing should be resumed.

The rail line leading south from the 19th Parallel into Vinh, which was believed interdicted, has been in operation at least for a brief period. A military-type pipeline, first detected in July, has been extended northward to within 10 miles of the 19th Parallel. Extensive POL bunkers have been constructed at the present -- although probably temporary -- northern terminus of the pipeline. Although it is probably not yet in operation, the pipeline has the potential for pumping upwards of 1,000 metric tons of POL a day southward through an exposed region of North Vietnam where US air attacks have taken a heavy toll of North Vietnamese trucks.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

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Last week the southward flow of supplies was still being hindered by damage caused by the recent flooding. Despite improved weather, sightings of trucks remained below the weekly average for the third consecutive week. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Watercraft activity in the northern areas of the Panhandle, however, has been high, probably reflecting a greater reliance on watercraft because of the combined effect of flooding and interdiction of the roads.

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[REDACTED] In the Vinh area, one US aircraft and one MIG-21 were downed in the third and fourth aerial encounters during the past six weeks. Another MIG-21 was downed in the same area by a surface-to-air missile fired from a US naval vessel in the Gulf of Tonkin.

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Logistics Activities

1. For the third consecutive week, sightings of trucks remained below the weekly average noted since 1 April, despite the improved weather during most of the week. Truck losses, although above last week's figure, were also lower than the weekly average, as shown in the following tabulation:

	Trucks			
	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>De- stroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Effective Losses a/</u>
This week b/ (16-22 Sep)	395	80	60	75
Last week (9-15 Sep)	408	47	59	50
Weekly average (since 1 Apr)	665	121	76	110

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b. Preliminary data.

The lingering effects of the recent flooding in the North Vietnamese Panhandle along with the heavy bombing of many of the bridges and other highway chokepoints have hindered truck activity within the combat area. [redacted] of Route 15 near the Laotian border at its junction with Route 101 reveals that some sections of these routes are apparently still impassable. [redacted] repair activity in progress near these areas, and the road should soon be open to through traffic.

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2. The combined effect of flooding and air interdiction has brought about, at least in the short term, a greater reliance on water transport.

25X1 [redacted] heavy watercraft activity just north of the 19th Parallel on the water routes near Cho Giat. A total of 87 logistic craft, including ten steel-hull barges of 100-ton capacity, were noted on the four-mile section of the Song Dau. [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] noted a new water-to-road transshipment point that connects the Song Dau with Route 1A near the large storage and rail-to-road transshipment complex at Tho Trong. Coverage of the Song Dau in late August had showed very little watercraft activity. On the Kenh Me River in the same area, 33 large steel-hull barges and 86 smaller logistic craft were noted [redacted]

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25X1 3. Significant watercraft activity was also observed south of the 19th Parallel. [redacted] sighting 660 watercraft during this week, compared with a weekly average of 455 sightings since 1 April. The waterways around Vinh -- the Song Ca, Kenh Gai, Song Ngan Sau, and Song Nghen -- had the heaviest traffic. Watercraft sightings south of the 18th Parallel were light, although watercraft carrying POL were attacked on the Nguon Nay near Quang Khe.

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Logistical Facilities

4. [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] the logistical buildup south of the 20th Parallel continues with no letup despite the floods. There is a clearly discernible increase in logistical facilities between the 19th and 20th Parallels, and there were significant increases in the numbers of trucks, rolling stock, and waterborne logistic craft within this sanctuary area.

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5. [redacted]

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[redacted] The extensive

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rail yard and transshipment area at Qui Vinh contained 46 serviceable pieces of railroad equipment, compared with 24 pieces on 27 August. Included in the total of 46 pieces was a train noted on the main line consisting of two truck locomotives and eight cars.

6. Further south in and around Tho Trang and Cho Giat, there were additional examples of increased logistical activity. At the marshalling yard at Tho Trang, 52 pieces of serviceable rolling stock were sighted, compared to only 27 on 3 September. This recently improved facility contains five large transshipment points, several of which contain moderate amounts of unidentified crates and canvas-covered supplies.

7. Medium to heavy truck activity continues at Cho Giat, located at the junction of Routes 1A and 194 just south of the Tho Trang facility. About 75 trucks, including three POL-type trailers, were observed on the several roads in the area

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8. About 1.5 miles south of Cho Giat, a newly identified large storage area was also identified at the village of Cao Hau, which is located on Route 1A just eight miles north of the 19th Parallel. This area contains several storage points where more than 1,000 POL drums, 500 boxes/crates, and various stacks of covered materials are dispersed.

9. Apparently, the North Vietnamese have stopped using the road-to-rail transshipment areas at Tu My, approximately one mile north of the 19th Parallel. A considerable number of pieces of rolling stock and a relatively large amount of stored supplies were observed in late August. There was no evidence of either open storage or rolling stock [redacted] The presence of new bomb damage which interdicted one of the two spurs probably caused the North Vietnamese to move their transshipment activities further north, probably to Tho Trang and Qui Vinh.

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[redacted] the rail line leading from the 19th Parallel south into Vinh -- which

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has been continuously interdicted since at least mid-June -- was recently open, at least for a brief period. Twenty-one rail flat cars were sighted on a rail loop near Vinh. These cars had not been seen on the line south of the 19th Parallel

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Pipeline

[redacted]
[redacted] the military-type pipeline [redacted]

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[redacted] first detected under construction in July, is now about 30 miles in length with its northern end now at Cu Dai some 10 miles south of the 19th Parallel (see the map). At Cu Dai, there are 132 POL bunkers, an increase of 20 since 12 June. Ninety-seven open revetments and 11 new excavations were also observed, with each bunker and revetment appearing to contain 12-ton POL tanks. There is some likelihood that despite the expanding storage facilities at Cu Dai, the northern terminus of the pipeline will eventually be located further north. If the pipeline were extended 15 miles to the northeast, it could connect with the railroad from Thanh Hoa and with inland waterways within the areas that are presently free of bombing. When in operation, the pipeline would have a theoretical capacity of about 1,000 metric tons a day.

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16. During the past week US and North Vietnamese aircraft clashed twice below the 19th Parallel in the Vinh area. A US aircraft was downed on 17 September, and a MIG-21 was shot down on 21 September. These were only the third and fourth aerial encounters during the past six weeks.

17. Another MIG-21 was downed in the Vinh area on 22 September by a surface-to-air missile fired from a US naval vessel in the Gulf of Tonkin, the second such incident of the war.

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18.

the main runway at Bai Thuong Airfield consists of two concrete touchdown portions at each end of the 7,800-foot runway

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The runway at Vinh remains cratered in spots, making use by jet fighters difficult.

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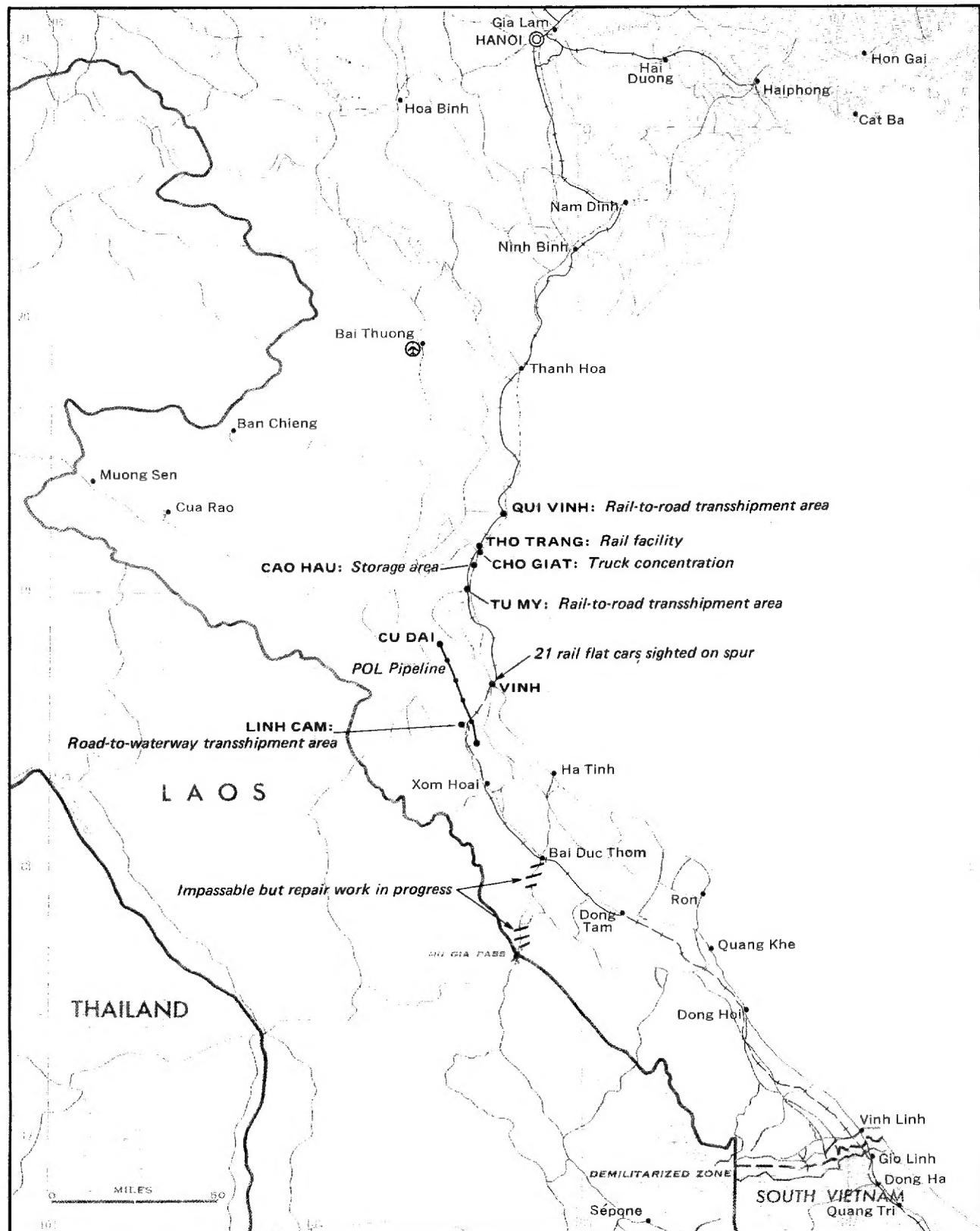
19. Sixty-four surface-to-air missile sites

26 of which were south of the 20th Parallel. None of the sites south of the 19th Parallel were occupied, and eight appeared to be unserviceable.

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